



Claiming Public Space, Asserting Class Identity, and Displaying Patriotism: The 1929 Rayon Workers' Strike Parades in Elizabethton, Tennessee

Author(s): Marie Tedesco

Source: *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 55-87

Published by: [University of Illinois Press](#) on behalf of the [Appalachian Studies Association, Inc.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41446748>

Accessed: 22-12-2015 12:01 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Appalachian Studies Association, Inc. and University of Illinois Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Appalachian Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

CLAIMING PUBLIC SPACE, ASSERTING CLASS IDENTITY, AND DISPLAYING PATRIOTISM: THE 1929 RAYON WORKERS' STRIKE PARADES IN ELIZABETHTON, TENNESSEE¹

BY MARIE TEDESCO

In March and April of 1929, workers at the two giant rayon plants (American Bemberg and American Glanzstoff) in Elizabethton, Tennessee, struck over a number of grievances, among them low wages, increased production quotas (stretchout), and petty workplace regulations. The workers communicated their grievances to the community by staging a number of strike parades through which they asserted their class identity and solidarity, claimed their share of the public space staked out by civic and business elites, and proclaimed (through dress and carrying of the American flag) their patriotism in opposition to the German plant owners. Historians have researched the Elizabethton strikes' place in the wave of textile strikes that took place in the South from 1929 - 30. The gendered and sexualized behavior of women strikers, especially in their actions toward National Guard troops called to Elizabethton, also has been analyzed, but the parades and their significance have not attracted scholarly attention. Sources used for the essay include contemporary newspaper accounts from local and regional papers, written and visual archival documents, and scholarship on labor history, local history, and the parade.

Almost seventy-five years ago rayon plant workers in Elizabethton, Tennessee, walked off their jobs in protest of low wages, increased production quotas (stretchout), capricious promotion policies, and petty workplace regulations. To publicize their demands and make known to the community the seriousness of their cause, the strikers staged a number of parades. Not only did the parades allow workers to assert their class identity and solidarity, but they allowed workers to claim their share of the public space that business and civic elites had staked out for themselves. Displaying their patriotism through the wearing of red, white, and blue outfits, and the carrying of the American flag, placed the striking rural

Marie Tedesco directs the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Her scholarly interests include the labor history of southern Appalachia, especially in textiles. She teaches courses on race and ethnicity in Appalachia and women in Appalachia.

Appalachian workers in patriotic opposition to the German plant owners and managers.

Although labor historians have devoted considerable attention to the Elizabethton strikes, especially in the context of the wave of 1929 - 30 Piedmont textile actions,² they scarcely have mentioned the Elizabethton parades—and the meaning of those parades. In common with workers in Europe, England, and elsewhere in the United States, the Elizabethton workers used the parade in many ways: as an instrument of protest and communication; as a way to forge and strengthen identity and solidarity-class consciousness, in other words; and as a way to claim public space. As protest, the strike parade often represents the apex of a strike, the culmination of a building crescendo of worker cohesion and solidarity (Simson 2001, 237). But where management is vehemently anti-union—as was the case with Bemberg and Glanzstoff in 1929—and refuses to negotiate with representatives of the rank and file, the strike parade also functions as a medium of communication, a substitute, in essence, for dialogue.³ Through the parade, workers declare to friends and foes alike their intention to continue their struggle. As demonstrations of solidarity, strike parades encourage and hearten fellow strikers while sending a warning to scabs and strikebreakers to stay away. Strike parades tell the bourgeoisie and their capitalist friends that the strikers are serious and united in their strike action.

Establishment of the Plants and Causes of the 1929 Strikes

The giant rayon factories owed their location in Elizabethton to the proselytizing of local civic and business elites who, in common with their counterparts in small towns and cities across the South in the 1920s, aggressively courted industries that promised to employ hundreds, even thousands, of local workers and to catapult small and medium-sized towns into the new industrial millennium. Elizabethton, a town of 2,749 inhabitants located in rural Carter County in the northeastern corner of Tennessee (Merritt 1986, 422),⁴ saw its civic and business leaders in 1925 successfully woo German corporate giant J.P. Bemberg, one of the continent's leading manufacturers of rayon, or "artificial silk," as many in the industry and popular press still called it. The following year, as Bemberg's American subsidiary, American Bemberg Company began production of rayon at a new plant built just outside the city limits, town elites convinced the corporate leaders of sister company Glanzstoff to locate a factory adjacent to the Bemberg facility. American Glanzstoff began production in 1928 amid grandiose predictions of both plants employing ten thousand workers within a few years (Tedesco 1998a, 696 - 97; Tedesco 1989, 47 - 50; Hodges 1964, 434 - 46; Hall 1986, 359). The excitement of prosperity filled the air.

Prosperity rested, however, on the backs of the women and men who went to work as factory hands in the plants. By 1929 Bemberg and Glanzstoff together employed approximately thirty-two hundred workers—a far cry from the ten thousand boasted of a few years earlier—but, nonetheless, an impressive number. The operatives—descendants mainly of English, Scots-Irish, and German settlers—were, according to town elites, free from the taint of “foreign,” that is to say, radical, European labor union influences so common in the North. The East Tennessee workers, like other white workers in the textile mills of the South, were thought by the elites to be grateful to secure wage-earning jobs in an agriculturally-depressed region (Tedesco 1998a, 696 - 97; Tedesco 1989, 52 - 53).⁵ Bemberg employment manager J.R. Gardner echoed the rather standard, if deprecatory, view of Appalachian labor in a survey he conducted for his employer to determine labor availability in Carter and adjacent counties:

We believe the employment of native labor will greatly lessen the danger of strikes and labor disturbances. In the main these people know nothing of unions or labor organizations; they appreciate the opportunity for steady employment and advancement and will be loyal to the industry. These plants afford the first opportunity for steady work a great many of them ever had and they are disposed to embrace this opportunity and do the right thing by the industry. (“Labor Survey” n.d.)⁶

But almost from the opening of the rayon plants, Elizabethton workers showed that they were not pitiable types grateful for anything thrown their way. Early on they made known their dissatisfaction with low wages and poor working conditions, as evidenced by short-lived, but largely unsuccessful, wild-cat walkouts in 1927 and 1928. As a result of the 1927 action, the United Textile Workers Union of America (UAW) international office issued a charter for an Elizabethton local, number 1630. Despite additional wild-cat strikes staged in 1928 and again in 1929, shortly before the big strike, Local 1630 became inactive until its resuscitation in March 1929 (*Elizabethton Star* 1929d, 1, 5; *Johnson City Chronicle* 1929a 10; *Johnson City Chronicle* 1929c, 1; Sargent 1929, 9 - 10).

In March and April 1929, Bemberg and Glanzstoff workers demonstrated their discontent by initiating two separate strikes. The causes of the strikes were myriad, rooted in both intolerable workplace conditions and external pressures generated upon workers by plant managers. While low wages, increased production quotas (stretchout), unsafe work practices, petty workplace regulations, absence of grievance procedures, and capricious

promotion policies constituted workers' most serious complaints, they also resented the pressure exerted by management to compel them to rent housing from Watauga Development Corporation, a local realty company controlled by a combination of Elizabethton elites and plant executives. (*Elizabethton Star* 1929a; Bowen 1929a, 666 - 67; Hall 1986, 363; Tedesco 1989, 56 - 57; Tedesco 1998b, 894 - 95).⁷

The first strike began on March 12, 1929, when Glanzstoff operative Margaret Bowen led a spontaneous walkout of 532 women fed up with low wages, unfair promotion policies, and workplace regulations they contended were aimed specifically at women workers (Bowen 1929b, 41 - 43; Hall 1986, 354, 364).⁸ The next day other shifts joined the walkout and at a mass meeting held in the evening at Carter County Auditorium (popularly known as the "Tabernacle"), strike leaders reactivated Local 1630. On March 14 the workers of Bemberg struck in sympathy with the Glanzstoff operatives and forced plant president Arthur Mothwurf to shut down both factories. In response, Mothwurf quickly secured two injunctions against strikers from a compliant Carter County Chancery Court. One injunction enjoined workers from picketing at the plant entrances, destroying plant property, and assembling at the plant gates, while a second one prohibited workers from assembling and picketing on county roads that led to the factory entrances. In light of workers' refusal to return to work, both UTW representatives and Tennessee Federation of Labor (TFL) head Paul Aymon requested that the United States Department of Labor Conciliation Service send a mediator to help settle the strike. Mediator Charles Wood helped workers and plant representatives forge a settlement on March 22. The company promised wage increases, lifting of the injunctions, establishment of plant grievance committees, and rehiring of workers regardless of union affiliation and activities. The agreement, however, did not recognize Local 1630 as the workers' bargaining agent (Tedesco 1998b, 894; Tedesco n.d., 7 - 18; and Moutoux 1929a).

The plants reopened on March 26, but soon workers began to complain bitterly that management was violating the agreement brazenly. Workers insisted that management, at the behest of the vehemently anti-union Mothwurf, refused to rehire union activists.⁹ Triggered by the firing of two union grievance committee members on April 15, the discontent of the workers once again erupted into a full-blown strike at both factories. Chancery Court and plant officials alike claimed that the March injunctions never had been lifted, while Mothwurf declared that he would never recognize the union. Nonetheless, workers seemed to be optimistic that striking again would convince management of the seriousness of their cause and lead to an equitable settlement. The second strike, however, quickly turned bitter and violent as Tennessee Governor Henry Horton, at

the request of civic and business leaders acting at the urging of Mothwurf, sent increased numbers of Tennessee National Guardsmen to Elizabethton. Strikers and soldiers clashed on the rural roads leading to town, with soldiers in one instance using tear gas on strikers. Soldiers arrested between three hundred and five hundred picketers in one three-day stretch from May 14 - 16. Acts of violence perpetrated by unknown parties led to mistrust and accusations; strikers blamed company agents for dynamiting the house of a striker, while the company blamed strikers for blowing up the town's water main (Tedesco 1998b, 894; Hodges 1964, 353 - 55; *Johnson City Chronicle* 1929h).

In the end, the second strike ended just as the first had—largely in failure. On May 25, 1929, UTW national leaders in consultation with Conciliation Service mediator Anna Weinstock convinced reluctant workers to accept an unsatisfactory settlement that did not address the work and wage issues at the heart of both strikes and that once more failed to recognize Local 1630 as the workers' bargaining agent.¹⁰

The Parades

During the shorter, first (March) strike, Elizabethton workers held three organized parades (excluding the spontaneous activities of late afternoon and early evening of March 13); during the longer, second (April - May) strike, workers staged six parades. Both women and men—and sometimes children—participated in the parades. More than likely, participants included family members, friends, and other supporters of the striking workers. Although the first parade followed violent activity at the Glanzstoff gates, none of the parades fostered violent actions. Except for the first parade (March 13), which began at the plant yard in front of the Glanzstoff gates and proceeded east through the Elizabethton business district, all other processions saw workers commence their marches either at the Tabernacle or the UTW local headquarters, both situated approximately two miles east of the factories, near the Carter County Court House.

The Tabernacle, located on the corner of East Street and Elk Avenue, served as an important site for the workers and their supporters. Originally erected in 1923 for a revival to be held by Mrs. Demarest, the granddaughter of Salvation Army founder General William Booth, the frame building, as *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (KNS) reporter John Moutoux observed, was a "dimly-lit pine tabernacle," as suited to mass labor meetings as it was to religious revivals (*Elizabethton Star* 1929k; Moutoux 1929b). In addition to serving as the launching point for the parades, the Tabernacle also was the site of numerous mass meetings and rallies.

The first Elizabethton strike parade began late in the morning of March 13, on the heels of raucous activities that took place at the Glanzstoff gates.

It is not clear if the parade was planned or spontaneous, but if planned, workers did so hurriedly, perhaps through an ad hoc mediation committee formed by Bowen and her cohorts at some point after they left the work floor on March 12. Early in the morning of March 13—in time to meet the 6:00 a.m. shift—Bowen and fellow strikers numbering anywhere from two hundred to four hundred women returned to the Glanzstoff gates. The women shouted at those entering the factory to join the strike: “We want more pay! We can’t live on the pay we receive” (*Knoxville News Sentinel* 1929a; *Daily Worker* 1929a; Bowen 1929b, 41 - 2). For the next three hours or so, Bowen and other strikers milled around outside in the rain, getting word from those inside on who was going to join the strike and when. After the three o’clock and morning shift spinners joined the ranks of the strikers, “We had all the backbone we wanted,” Bowen said. At ten minutes to nine, the strikers opened the gates and went in, but management had barred the doors, so the strikers rushed to the lower spinning room, getting there before anyone else. “We went through the spinning room,” Bowen recalled, “and took everything as we went—I mean all the men. We went into the reeling and lacing department and carried them with us. We went into the inspection room, and they had the inspectors going back and forth to keep us from talking with them [the strikers]” (Bowen 1929a, 666 - 67). By ten a.m., over one thousand operatives were on strike and plant president Arthur Mothwurf was on the premises, ready to close down the factory (*Knoxville News Sentinel* 1929a; *Daily Worker* 1929a).

Strikers, their supporters, and other “hangers-on,” gathered around the factory gate and in the plant yard, eyed by both the plants’ security guards—referred to by the *Daily Worker* as members of a “private thug army” (*Daily Worker* 1929b)—and city police who, according to the local paper, “seemed to be making no effort to check the great throngs which milled restlessly about building.” From the crowds there emanated frequent shouts, many of which “seemed more hilarious than angry” (*Elizabethton Star* 1929c). Led more than likely by Bowen’s committee, John B. Penix and F.L. Stubbs, Carter County natives, and American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizers, strikers, and friends circumnavigated the Glanzstoff facility, and upon returning to the factory’s front yard, marched away from the building onto Elk Avenue, the main highway that ran in an east-west direction in front of both plants and through the Elizabethton business district. While hundreds of paraders marched on foot through the rain eastward to the Tabernacle, others rode through the streets. “Hundreds of the girls,” reported the *Elizabethton Star*, “rode through Elk Avenue in buses and taxis, shouting and laughing at people who watched them from the windows and store-fronts in the business section” (*Knoxville Journal* 1929a; *Elizabethton Star* 1929c).¹¹

Arriving at the Tabernacle around noon (reports are unclear on the exact time), workers had their first chance to come together, and strike leaders and labor organizers had their first opportunity to assess the workers' commitment to the strike. Strikers complained bitterly about their low wages and demanded increases from weekly wages that often were as low as five dollars. Penix and Stubbs formed another mediation committee to meet with plant management; they also urged workers to return to work, pending formation of a textile union local. Penix also pointed out—if anyone cared to know—that the American Federation of Labor (AFL) had not authorized the strike. Joining Penix and Stubbs in exhorting workers to return to work was Attorney General Ben Allen of the First Judicial Circuit. Allen promised the workers that the dispute would be mediated immediately (*Kingsport Times* 1929a; *Elizabethton Star* 1929b; and Hodges 1964, 345).¹² Strikers did not heed the advice of Allen and Penix to return to work, but rather, some workers continued to mill about town, congregating with fellow strikers, while others simply went home for the rest of the day.

Unorganized, spontaneous group action, dangerous in that it harbored the potential for violence, also helped forge bonds of identity that made effective the organized behavior of mass meetings and parading. Late in the afternoon of March 13, for instance, hundreds of now-idle Glanzstoff and Bemberg workers, anxious to cash paychecks received on Wednesday, en masse approached (“stormed” said some reports) the First National Bank of Elizabethton, located on the corner of Elk Avenue and Sycamore Street, about a third of a mile west of the Tabernacle.¹³ The crowd in the bank lobby was so great, reported the *Knoxville Journal*, that it overturned a counter, which resulted in injuring two women. Although the *KJ* article described the crowd as “good-natured,” with damage and injury stemming from the size of the crowd, the article displayed an ambivalence about the mood of the strikers: “The strikers with their money, assumed a holiday spirit, buying candy and ice cream and continuing a parade of the streets . . . [but] several men sought to purchase moonshine liquor, which gave rise to apprehension as to events which might occur at night. Throughout it all, however, was an undercurrent of unrest” (*Knoxville Journal* 1929a).

Throughout the day, in taxis and buses given over to them by their drivers, some workers rode through town, hanging out windows, shouting, laughing, and singing, while others sought the companionship of fellow workers in the second mass meeting held in the Tabernacle on the evening of March 13. *KNS* reporter Moutoux described the evening crowd as good natured, even though it had to put up with rain coming in through the Tabernacle's roof (Moutoux 1929a). At the meeting, Penix and Baptist minister J.M. Anderson of nearby Winner, rallied the hundreds of workers, prominent among them the young women who initiated the walkout. Penix urged joining the union:

In the north, east and west the workers are organized. Why shouldn't you be too? As long as you kneel and knuckle to the man who has the money, you're his slave.

How in the name of God are you going to live on 18 cents an hour? You are warned that you'll lose your jobs if you join the union. Well, you wouldn't lose anything if you did. (Moutoux 1929a)

Penix's last statement incited hearty laughter from many in the audience, but the oratory of Anderson mesmerized the audience:

You women work for practically nothing. You must come together and say that such things must cease to be. It is impossible to pay the house rent, water, light and fuel bills, and feed and clothe the family unless two or three families come together and occupy one house that is hardly large enough for one family.

The hand of oppression is growing on our people. You people are gathered here tonight to make life better and cleaner. You should lift your voices in prayer until God opens the way to a more glorious life for you. (Moutoux 1929a)

The two-hour long Tabernacle meeting achieved what Penix and Stubbs sought: the chartering—actually the rechartering—of a UTW local. (Penix initially did not remember that the international had issued a charter for a local in 1927 and had to be reminded of this by a fellow organizer, perhaps Stubbs.) The local became UTW local 1630 (*Elizabethton Star* 1929d; Moutoux 1929a; Sargent 1929, 9 - 10).¹⁴ Whether or not those at the meeting then joined fellow strikers and supporters in "making holiday" on the streets of Elizabethton is unclear. It is probable that some, exhausted from the meeting, simply went home, while others, perhaps the youthful women and men among the strikers, joined others in the streets and in ongoing parades of vehicles past the silent, darkened rayon factories (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1929b). The festive activities and the carnival atmosphere surrounding the workers' unorganized activity, typical of the early stages of a strike, marked the first time that the strikers exhibited loose behavior associated with the release of pent-up frustrations.

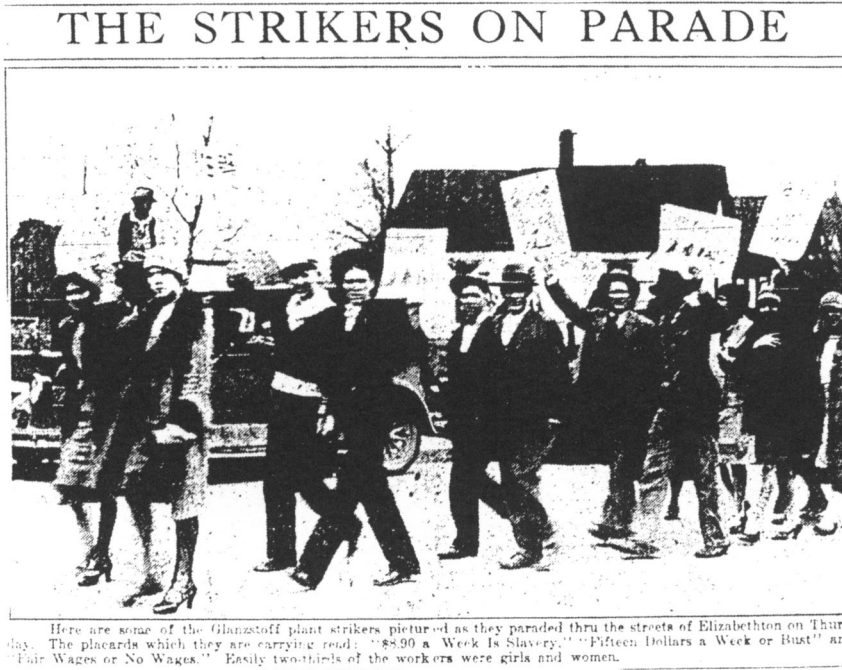
March 14 dawned, and remained, a rainy, chilly late winter day. Early in the afternoon strikers met in the Tabernacle in preparation of the first

pre-planned strike. Approximately 200 mostly female strikers and “others with them” braved the rain and chill—striker Hazel Jones said “it rained so hard I nearly drowned” (Jones 1929)—to march from the Tabernacle west down Elk Avenue through the business district and past the idle rayon factories. Participants carried banners and placards proclaiming “eight dollars a week is slavery,” “fifteen dollars a week or bust,” “we can’t live on \$8.50 a week,” and “we want a fair living wage.” Strikers shouted and sang (whether or not labor tunes is unknown) as they marched. After their parade, workers returned to the Tabernacle, more than likely by the direct route down Glanzstoff Highway and Elk Avenue (*Johnson City Staff News* 1929a; *Charlotte Observer* 1929; *Johnson City Chronicle* 1929c).

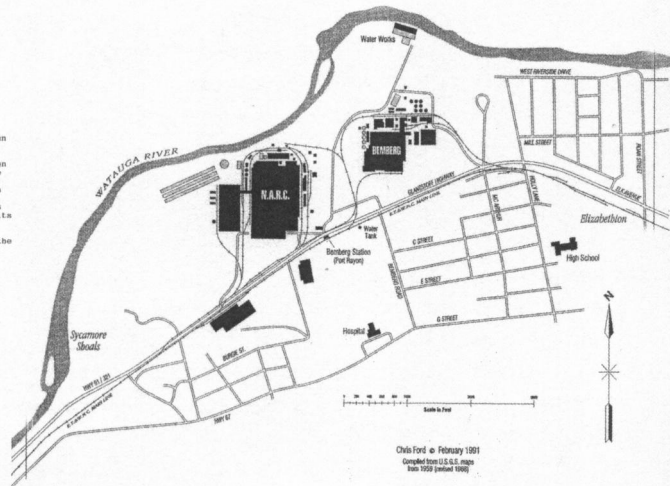
The sole still image of parading strikers reproduced in area newspapers appeared in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* on March 16 under the caption “The Strikers on Parade” (see Figure 1, page 64).¹⁵ The parading strikers looked like anything but rural factory operatives. Despite the rain and cold, both women and men dressed in their Sunday church clothes, not in their factory work garb. Men wore suits, while women wore dresses and high-heeled shoes. No doubt conscious of their status in town, especially in relation to the plants’ managers and their allies—the local civic and business elites—workers sought to make the best possible impression by parading in their Sunday clothes. In their desire to use dress and decorum to appear respectable before the bourgeois classes of the community, Elizabethton workers were not unique. For instance, ante-bellum strikers in New England paraded in their best attire, as did the English textile workers of the northwest who struck in the late nineteenth century. The link between dress and decorum also marked American Labor Day parades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Zonderman 1998; Spencer 1998; Campbell 1998; Kaster 1998).¹⁶

Film of parading strikers likewise depicts workers conscious of their public image. While a number of parading workers wore everyday clothes (e.g., coveralls for the men, house dresses for the women, dungarees for the children), many wore their Sunday best clothes. Men decked themselves out in their Sunday suits, while women appeared in stylish dresses, coats, and hats (Raulston 1929, American Bemberg Films Collection 1929 - 30, Tape 1).

The route of the second strike parade set a pattern for subsequent parades, which left either from the union meeting hall or the Tabernacle and headed west down Elk Avenue through the Elizabethton business district and then along Elk’s extension, Glanzstoff Highway, past the rayon plants (see Figure 2). At the factories, some dispersed and loitered around the buildings or they reformed for a return march east along Glanzstoff Highway and Elk Avenue back specifically to the Tabernacle for a mass

Figure 1**Figure 2**

Map showing location of North American Rayon and American Rayon factories along the Watauga River in Elizabethton, Tennessee. Workers began most of their parades either from the union hall or the the Tabernacle (Carter County Auditorium) located in the vicinity of the Carter County Courthouse on Broad Street. Marchers proceeded west down Broad Street, to its intersection with Elk Avenue, the extension of which becomes Glanzstoff Highway as the road ran in front of the factories. (Map courtesy of Chris Ford.)



meeting of the strikers, or to the courthouse area in general where many milled around in fellowship.

The route of a parade and the places of significance passed on that route, Australian labor scholar Terry Irving claims, reveal as much about the meaning of a parade as do actions taken by marchers (1998).¹⁷ The route taken by the rayon workers certainly passed a number of sites of significance. Strikers paraded down the main business thoroughfare, past stores of petit bourgeoisie, some of whom supported them,¹⁸ but also past businesses and banks of bourgeoisie who aligned themselves with the German industrial capitalists. Strikers thus asserted their place in Elizabethton to both their bourgeois friends and enemies. By marching past the gates of the rayon factories, the workers defied the newest and most powerful employer of the county. By beginning and ending marches at the Tabernacle, located adjacent to the Carter County Courthouse, strikers asserted themselves to a judicial system whose quick issuance of injunctions against picketing had demonstrated its allegiance to the foreign, capitalist power of the county against the local, native-born workers.

The *Elizabethton Star* chose to ignore not only the March 14 parade, but also the pre- and post-parade loitering and gathering of groups of strikers throughout the town's business district (*Elizabethton Star* 1929e). To a greater or lesser degree, the Johnson City, Kingsport, and Knoxville papers all reported on the parade and all noted that striking workers made their presence known by milling about the town and gathering in groups to visit with one another and, no doubt, to share strike information. According to the *Star*, however, all was quiet in Elizabethton (*Johnson City Staff News* 1929a; *Johnson City Staff News* 1929b; *Kingsport Times* 1929b).

The third March parade took place on the twenty-first and specifically aimed to communicate workers' dissatisfaction with both the companies' announced plans to reopen the plants and the swearing into service of additional Tennessee National Guard soldiers who, it appeared to the workers, were supposed to ensure the reopening of the factories (*Knoxville Journal* 1929b). Yet the parade was a festive one: "Workers Parade: Striking Employees Make Merry About Streets," exclaimed the *Elizabethton Star*. In a telling comparison, the *ES* reporter compared Elk Avenue to one of the main streets of Passaic, New Jersey, "as scenes similar to those enacted during the prolonged strike in that city were re-enacted in Elizabethton." Hundreds of workers milled about the city and "trucks filled with young girls and boys threaded their ways in and out of normal traffic, the workers shouting as though they were enroute to a picnic, instead of participants in a strike, the end of which is not as yet foreseen" (*Elizabethton Star* 1929f).

Seven-hundred workers or so gathered around three o'clock in the afternoon, more than likely at the union headquarters located on Elk Avenue

over the store of H.M. Slagle. Formation of the participants took about ten minutes, as standard bearers waving American flags went to the head of the procession. Trucks “jammed to capacity with workers” followed the standard bearers and strikers on foot came up behind them. “As the parade moved away in the direction of the plants and Johnson City,” noted the *Star*, “the strikers cheered loudly at the huge crowd gathered to see them off. It was an unusual sight for Elizabethton, famed throughout the South for many years because it had more diversified industries than any other city of its size and never had any labor disturbances.” As the procession moved down Elk Avenue, F.S. Solomon, strike leader as well as a member of the bricklayers’ union, rode up and down alongside the strikers, shouting through a megaphone at the occupants of the trucks and cars. While many onlookers cheered the strikers, others, said the *Star*, “seemed stupefied and dazed, as if they did not know what it was all about” (*Elizabethton Star* 1929f).

In common with the carnival-like activities that took place a week earlier, the third parade had a festive air, with participants acting as if they were on holiday, rather than engaged in a labor action against their employer. The element of festivity, characteristic of strikes in their early stages, borrows from urban working-class street festivals and demonstrations observed in England, Europe, and the United States. In their studies on French strike activities, both Henri Molierac and Michelle Perrot comment on the element of festival as it relates to the strike. Both emphasize that the festive, carnival atmosphere derives from the strike providing a break from the drudgery and routine of the factory. Workers are happy and relaxed, pleased to be back with their families, indulging in their favorite pastimes (Perrot 1987, 145 - 46; Moulirac 1977, 64, 66). The Elizabethton workers “made merry” and acted as if they were on a lark. Moreover, they combined the element of patriotism—and xenophobia—with festival, as the carrying of the American flag and the wearing of patriotic clothing so aptly demonstrated. As American workers, the strikers identified themselves as the real patriots, in opposition to the foreign German capitalists.

The gathering of the strikers signified both their unity and commitment to the community of workers. The gathering itself was a statement of class-consciousness made to the plant owners and their friends, the local civic and business elites. The communion of the festive gathering, as Perrot points out, was vital to the workers because it provided that feeling of well-being that Jean Jacques Rousseau thought to be the essence of the festival (Perrot 1987, 149). In Elizabethton the communion and well-being fostered by the third parade assumed special importance because it showed the non-striking workers, the plant managers, and the local elites that the strikers had the solidarity to stay out on strike.

Plant operations resumed shortly after the March 22 settlement, but worker distrust and dissatisfaction quickly surfaced as it became apparent that management was not rehiring many union leaders and activists. Management's April 15 firing of three union men who were members of a grievance committee served as the trigger for the second strike (*Knoxville News Sentinel* 1929b; Tedesco 1998b, 894). The mood of the second strike initially was pessimistic, as indicated by the first parade, a silent one of several hundred workers who on the morning of April 20, marched solemnly down Elk Avenue past the store of R.B. Moreland, an advocate of the workers, who, the day before, had resigned as mayor of Elizabethton in protest of plant management's treatment of the operatives (*Elizabethton Star* 1929g).¹⁹

After the initial parading activity, workers took a hiatus from public marches until stirred to action again on May 6 by Mothwurf's reopening of the chemical and mechanical departments of Bemberg and Glanzstoff and by Tennessee Governor Henry Horton's calling out additional National Guardsmen to "protect" the plants' property and to prevent violence against "loyal" workers who returned to their jobs. Not only did workers stage two parades, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, but they held meetings and demonstrations at various sites all day long. (One morning meeting, for instance, took place in the tobacco warehouse, located not far from the courthouse, and featured UTW Vice-President William Kelly as speaker.) As approximately 200 scabs, organized by plant chemist S.C. Rhea into the "Loyal Workers of Bemberg and Glanzstoff," entered the factory at seven a.m. for the first shift, 500 female and male strikers, led by men carrying the American flag, marched double-file down Elk Avenue and Glanzstoff Highway towards the plants. The parading strikers knew that National Guardsmen from a Knoxville machine gun company were manning gun nests alongside the Glanzstoff Highway embankment, as well as on the roofs of the factories. Moreover, soldiers with bayoneted rifles protected the gates of the plants and ringed both factories. Mindful of the potential for disaster, the strikers marched quietly in front of the factory gates before they returned to the business district and thence to the Tabernacle. Because injunctions enjoined them from picketing at the plant gates, strikers made no attempt to picket at the entrances. Union leaders proclaimed that the purpose of the strike was a show of strength, a purpose made all the more important in the face of the plants' show of strength made obvious by the increased presence of the military (*Elizabethton Star* 1929h; *Women's Wear Daily* 1929; *Kingsport Times* 1929c; *Kingsport Times* 1929d).²⁰

Striking workers planned a second afternoon parade to demonstrate the strength and resolve of the union and to refute the companies' assertion that the strikers were ready to capitulate and return to work. Scheduled to

commence at three o'clock, the parade did not get going until four because of a terrific downpour. Men and women on foot marched in a steady, driving rain from the Tabernacle down Elk Avenue and Glanzstoff Highway past the heavily-guarded plants. Immediately behind the marchers were thirty-seven cars and trucks loaded with strikers. Accounts of the numbers participating in the parade varied, with union leaders claiming "at least 1,000," but the JCC reporting "by actual count 396 men and women marched in the gathering" (*Daily Worker* 1929c; *Johnson City Chronicle* 1929e).

On the next day workers gathered at four p.m. at the union headquarters and marched down Elk Avenue and Glanzstoff Highway to the plants. Described by both the *Johnson City Chronicle* and the *Elizabethton Star* as the "largest parade sponsored by union forces thus far," the event included "nine hundred and sixty-six participants by actual count." Led by UTW Vice-President Kelly and Local 1630's F.L. Stubbs, the parade was more of a spectacle than its predecessors. At the beginning of the procession, marchers carried a huge American flag, alongside a man dressed in guardsmen's trousers and leggings, but with a civilian shirt. At the front of the parade marched a number of young women in unique attire: some dressed in white trousers and (presumably) white blouses, while others complemented their white outfits by draping themselves in patriotic red, white, and blue bunting. Throughout the procession, participants carried small American flags; at the end of the line a single marcher carried a huge American flag (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1929f; *Elizabethton Star* 1929i). The JCC, but not the *ES*, reported that while the strikers and their friends paraded, the National Guard not only kept its machine gun positions on the roofs of the factories, but also placed guardsmen with automatic rifles and "regular" rifles in skirmish formation on the hillside adjoining the plants (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1929f). Film footage shows the machine-gun nests located on the factory roofs, as well as on the sloped embankments of Glanzstoff Highway not far from the plant gates (Raulston 1929, American Bemberg Films Collection 1929 - 30, Tape 1).

Local and national labor leaders protested the governor's use of the soldiers as guardians of capitalist interests at the expense of labor's. Horton insisted, however, that the soldiers were needed for "mutual protection" of striking and non-striking workers and as a guarantee that there would be no bloodshed or violence (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1929g; Horton 1929).²¹ Union leaders wanted Horton to come to Elizabethton to demonstrate that he was not biased in favor of capital. To emphasize their position, as well as to refute the assertions of the Loyal Workers and plant management that strikers were anxious to return to their jobs, the strikers, led by local and national labor leaders (the AFL's Edward McGrady, the UTW's William Kelley, the Tennessee Federation of Labor's Paul Aymon, and Local 1630's

F.L. Stubbs) on May 9 staged a parade described by local papers as the “largest yet seen.” Approximately 1,100 marched following the lead of the labor leaders and a local string band (*Elizabethton Star* 1929j).

During the week following the May 9 parade, strikers refrained from parading, but continued to hold mass meetings to protest the reopening of the plants, the use of militia against the workers, the importing of strikebreakers from the neighboring states of North Carolina and Virginia, and the transporting of scabs to the factories. In addition, strikers, led perhaps by F.L. Stubbs, F.S. Soloman, and local president G.H. Markland, decided to counter the companies’ moves of importing strikebreakers and transporting scabs, by picketing the outlying roads that connected Carter County to North Carolina and Virginia.²² Although injunctions enjoined the workers from picketing at the plant gates and on entrances and roads leading to the plants, the roads strikers chose to picket were three to five miles from the plant gates—too far away, they thought, to be covered by the injunctions. The primary arteries selected were Stoney Creek Highway, located in the northern panhandle section of the county and used to transport strikebreakers from Virginia, and Gap Creek and Valley Forge roads, located in the south-southwestern sector of the county, and favored by strikebreakers coming from North Carolina. The heaviest picketing occurred May 14 - 16, and featured strikers stopping cars loaded with scabs and strikebreakers, and threatening opponents of the strike with bodily harm if they continued on their way to work. Upon hearing reports of picketing on the rural roads, plant officials convinced commanding officers to send contingents of soldiers stationed in town to the outlying areas. Moreover, a number of local residents who feared bloodshed or riots made calls into town to law enforcement officials urging them to send the soldiers out. The soldiers arrested approximately 300 strikers during this three-day period and on one occasion used tear-gas to disperse a group of strikers on Valley Forge Road. While some arrests were for criminal violations (assault, for instance), most were for violations of the injunctions against picketing the roads leading to the plants.²³

In the midst of strike activity, the Tennessee Federation of Labor, which held its 1929 annual meeting in Knoxville, decided to move the last day of the three-day session to Elizabethton to demonstrate its support for the strikers. On May 15, state and national labor leaders met in Elizabethton. TFL president Paul Aymon and secretary W.C. Birthright led the state federation; Knoxville Central Labor Union (KCLU) president Vance Stamps and KCLU secretary A.C. Clapp attended, as did Edward McGrady, representing the American Federation of Labor (*Book of Laws of the Tennessee Federation of Labor . . . 1929*, 18 - 23).²⁴

To demonstrate their unwavering unity and fierce loyalty to the strike

cause, and to protest the arrests of picketers on the outlying rural roads, strikers held a festive parade during the afternoon of May 15. Marching once more in a driving rain that began at daylight and continued throughout the day, the strikers began their journey from outside the Tabernacle and continued down Elk Avenue and Glanzstoff Highway past the heavily-guarded factories. Approximately 1,200 strikers participated in the parade which, despite the violence and confrontations of the past two days' picketing, maintained an air of festival and playful defiance, a mood accentuated by the playing of a Knoxville brass band and the singing of patriotic tunes by the marchers. *Knoxville News Sentinel* reporter John Moutoux, who reported regularly on the strike, wrote that the steady rainfall did not dampen the spirits of the strikers, but only seemed to make them more cheerful. The strikers "only laughed, sang, and cheered at the armed National Guard who faced them. They even waved and called the first names of some of the guardsmen, for most of the young men in uniforms deployed the length of the two plant ground were Elizabethton youths and friends of many of the men and girls on strike" (Moutoux 1929c).

The strikers' mocking of guardsmen indicates that the May 15 parade aimed specifically to protest the use of the militia as the agents of capital and to demonstrate that even in the face of machine guns the strikers were going to maintain solidarity. Mocking of the militia, a behavior that carried an undercurrent of threat to order and stability, draws from the same underlying causes that motivated early nineteenth-century urban working-class revelers to stage mock militia parades and to engage in festive behavior that threatened the cherished order and decorum of the bourgeois classes that considered themselves the moral and economic superiors of the working classes (Davis 1982, 194 - 95).²⁵

Newspaper accounts of the procession singled out female participants—"girls" as the paper most often characterized them—in the parade. Some women strikers marched on foot, while others rode in the vehicles that took part in the procession. The most flamboyant actions of women paraders came in the May 15 parade, as described by Moutoux in his report for the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*:

A dozen girl strikers draped in the American flag and carrying the colors headed the parade, and as they reached the head of the line of guards, the captain of each company shouted "present arms" and the guardsmen clicked their heels together and snapped their guns in the position ordered, while the captains came to a salute as the flag and strikers marched by. (Moutoux 1929c)

The participation of women not only in the May 15 parade, but also in its predecessors, followed what appears to be a venerable labor tradition that put women, and sometimes children, front and center stage in strike parades. Perrot wrote in her analysis of late nineteenth-century strikes in France that women and children, bands and flags, led the way. Since she saw the strike parade as socially homogenous, "closed in on itself," and as "an organized society, with a marked family structure," Perrot interpreted women's participation in the parade as natural, as a reflection of the structure of society (Perrot 1987, 158 - 59). To the contrary, historian Jacquelyn Hall's analysis of women's participation in the Elizabethton strike activities placed the women strikers in the tradition of "disorderly women," that is, of women whose actions—and sometimes character—came close to being disreputable (Hall 1986, 356). Hall's women were more like the unruly and deviant women that Victoria Bynum wrote about in her work, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Bynum 1992, 88 - 110). The women who participated in the picketing on Gap Creek, Valley Forge, and Stoney Creek roads were bold, oppositional, defiant, and unruly, while the women (some of them the same ones, no doubt) who paraded seemed to be more orderly and festive, even if at times defiant. If, as Mary Ryan asserts in her 1989 essay, in its antebellum origins (1825 - 50) the American parade was a Jacksonian instrument that celebrated masculinity and the orderly civic virtues attached to it, and if bringing women into parades, even as symbols (e.g. the Goddess of Liberty), led to the decline of the "classic American parade," then women who participated in a male ritual could, and should, be viewed as "disorderly" (Ryan 1989, 132, 147 - 50).

Sixteen-millimeter film shot by the rayon plants' photographer in May 1929 by and large depicted either soldiers or striking workers, but not soldiers interacting with workers. The notable exception showed two smiling young women approach two guardsmen stationed at the plant gate and engage in what could be interpreted as either flirtatious or taunting behavior. Neither the guards nor the workers appeared tense or confrontational (Raulston 1929) unlike, no doubt, the women strikers who confronted the soldiers sent to prevent picketing strikers from turning back scabs and strikebreakers on Gap Creek Road. In court testimony given at the trials of those arrested, both "girl strikers" and guardsmen recounted—sometimes defiantly and sometimes playfully—the taunting behavior employed by the women.²⁶

Governor Henry Horton, with the support and approbation of many professionals and bourgeoisie, kept the troops in Elizabethton. Dr. J.A. Hardin, one of the few area professionals to object to the troops' presence, wrote to Governor Horton on May 12 and May 16 to question the necessity

of troops in Elizabethton. His second communication contained telling commentary on the May 15 parade and on the presence of the guard:

I was in Elizabethton yesterday [and] reviewed the parade of the poor workers now on strike; it was enough to convince any sane man that our working class at least deserves one small spark of sympathy if nothing more.

What else did I see besides the parade? . . . men and boys with olive drab on arrived with high power rifles, steel jackets, and copper jacket bullets, machine guns on top of the Bemberg and Glanzstoff plants—these machine guns are trained direct at quiet citizens' homes, their wives, and innocent children playing in the yards. My God, in the name of humanity as Governor of this great state what do you mean? Do you consider human life if there should be trouble arise? . . . Take these guns away [,] give the soldiers, tear bombs, black jacks and police bullets, as the strikers are not armed with any thing but what nature gave them [,] their bony fists. Again as I stated before there is no trouble with the union—it all comes from the political class that you are catering to (Horton 1929).

Plant management kept an eye on the activities of the strikers, including their participation in parades. Mothwurf hired both Baldwin-Felts and Corporations Auxiliary spies to infiltrate the ranks of workers and to report back on their activities. The reports of the spies (perhaps together with reports from local strikebreakers) provided the basis for the May 18, 1929, "Consolidated List of Undesirables for Glanzstoff & Bemberg," which categorized by department individual workers who participated in strike activities. The most serious offenses seemed to be cussing at soldiers and "loyal workers," picketing, trying to recruit for the union, and attempting to prevent "loyal workers" from entering the factories, but participation in the strike parades was serious enough to warrant attention for a number of strikers (Consolidated list of undesirables . . . 1929).

The strike parades were integral to the rayon workers' labor action in 1929, but how the rural Elizabethton factory hands learned of the parade as an instrument of labor action is not clear. Surely, Carter County workers learned of strike traditions, perhaps including strike parades, and certainly picketing, through family and friends who worked in the coal mines of Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. Some residents left for mine work, but returned. For instance, Robert Cole, a Bemberg striker interviewed

by Jacquelyn Hall in 1981, had worked in a Kentucky coal mine, as had a number of his friends and family members. Even though Cole told Hall that as a union man in the mines he had not participated in any strike activities and, as a matter of fact, had returned home during one strike, nonetheless he learned of strike activities during his mining days (Hall 1981).

While strikes had taken place in neighboring Johnson City, as well as in Knoxville (115 miles to the west) and Chattanooga (230 miles to the southwest), only Chattanooga workers had previously staged strike parades. Both the streetcar drivers' strikes of 1916 - 17 and the textile operatives' strikes of 1917 featured strike parades. During the carmen's strikes led by the Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees of America, workers marched in three parades, including a "monster parade" of two thousand amalgamated members and their supporters, as well as members of other Chattanooga locals who marched in solidarity with the carmen (Jones 1993, 102, 108 - 10). In the textile strikes, operatives in the wool, knitting, and hosiery mills of Chattanooga sought union recognition and a forty-eight-hour work week for women and children. Four strike parades, including one silent procession, drew attention to the workers' cause (*Daily Times* 1917a; *Sunday Times* 1917; *Daily Times* 1917b). These strikes and their attendant parades helped create a tradition of parading for labor in urban Chattanooga, but how well-known that tradition was in Carter County is difficult to determine.

Indeed, the origin of the strike parade itself in the United States is difficult to determine. In *Parades and Power*, Susan Davis (relying on the work of E.P. Thompson and others) traces the origin of the strike parade to late eighteenth-century labor struggles in England. Related to other types of street behavior common to the urban working classes, the strike parade perhaps made its first appearance in the United States in the Northeast in the 1820s and subsequently became a vital part of the 1835 General Strike in Philadelphia (Davis 1988, 133).²⁷ The first strike parade in the South appears to have been a racially-integrated affair that took place in New Orleans in 1825, when black and white sailors paraded for higher wages. Thirty years later railroad workers striking against the Northeastern Railroad in Charleston, South Carolina, also paraded to publicize their cause (McDonnell 1998). In the early twentieth century, northeastern textile workers paraded. Paterson, New Jersey, silk workers paraded as a show of strength on their way to their Madison Square Garden pageant in 1913, while woolen workers on strike in Passaic, New Jersey, in 1926 used the parade to circumvent a public order prohibiting mass picketing (Simson 2001, 237; Garrison 1989, 196 - 203; Siegel 1953, 179 - 85).²⁸

It is possible that Elizabethton workers learned of the power of the parade through other sources of parading traditions, notably those that

center on Labor Day and patriotic holidays, in particular, Independence Day. Labor Day combined elements of working-class oppositional traditions with those of working-class festive culture, while Independence Day carried on republican festive customs popular in urban areas from the early days of the republic.²⁹ Labor Day originated in 1882 with the first celebration sponsored by the Central Labor Union (CLU) of New York City. As Michael Kazin and Steven J. Ross explain, CLU organizers drew upon a number of sources in their planning of the first Labor Day celebration: the oppositional traditions of radical labor organizations; artisan and civic rituals; and organized labor's practice of using collective leisure (e.g., picnics, ball games) to encourage worker solidarity. The first Labor Day featured a parade of ten to twenty thousand union men (only a few women participated) who marched in disciplined formation from lower Broadway to Union Square, proudly displaying the tools of their trades and wearing uniforms particular to their trades. The paraders carried banners that proclaimed their anti-capitalist sentiments: "Labor Creates All Wealth"; "Labor Built This Republic, Labor Shall Rule It"; and "The Government Must Own the Railroads and Telegraphs." Following the parade, workers attended picnics, participated in ball games, dances, and sings. Throughout the day, the symbols and imagery of patriotism (e.g., American flags, drum and bugle corps dressed in red, white, and blue) linked the workers to civic and patriotic traditions (Kazin and Ross 1992, 1299 - 1302).

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw Labor Day become less oppositional and more accommodating, especially as the AFL, with its "bread and butter" approach to unionism, became the dominant force in organized labor and as American holidays overall primarily became vehicles for consumption (Schmidt 1991, 887 - 89; 891; 893). The day morphed into a "celebration" of labor's accomplishments and a day free from work for all, bourgeois and proletarian alike. During the 1920s, in Atlanta, San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles, the four cities studied by Kazin and Ross, Labor Day focused more on citizenship and Americanism than on wages and working conditions. The labor militancy of the 1919 - 22 years (especially in coal and railroads) only seemed to motivate the AFL to make Labor Day a mainstream event designed to convince the American public that workers really did not intend to threaten the capitalist order. In the above-mentioned cities, as the decade progressed, attendance at Labor Day events declined, and the day lost its local vitality (Kazin and Ross 1992, 1310 - 11).³⁰

In East Tennessee, Labor Day observance and celebrations, in many respects, reflected the trends Kazin and Ross discovered in their study. Knoxville and Chattanooga had the most established Labor Day traditions, with Knoxville's Central Labor Union responsible for organizing the region's largest parades. In 1922, for example, Knoxville largely shut down for

the CLU-sponsored picnic and program held in Chilhowee Park, the site of previous Labor Day events. A "great throng" attended the Chilhowee event, noted the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, while hundreds more gathered at Caswell Park for baseball games. The day ended with thousands of spectators viewing the "great street pageant that wended its way through Gay Street shortly after 4 o'clock." The pageant, "one of the most quiet and orderly Labor Day parades" ever witnessed in the city, resembled a Fourth of July procession, rather than a labor procession, as the American flag was omnipresent (*Knoxville News Sentinel* 1922).³¹ By the end of the decade, however, the KCLU had abandoned the parade and speeches in favor of a workman's picnic and games in Sterchi Park. The day had become more of a leisure holiday, a day of rest at home or recreation at nearby mountain parks. Yet, even though hundreds of Knoxvilleans (more than likely middle-class citizens) took bus, rail, or auto excursions into the mountains, the early afternoon Sterchi events attracted four or five thousand people, with five thousand or so attending the early evening picnic supper and night time fireworks display (*Knoxville News Sentinel* 1928b; *Knoxville News Sentinel* 1928a).

Johnson City Labor Day celebrations were rather quiet; there is no evidence that local unions sponsored parades or events such as the picnics common to Knoxville's observance of the day. By the late 1920s the closing of factories and businesses and the decoration of the town with flags and bunting marked the day. Outings in the mountains and auto races in Morristown and Newport seemed to be the activities of choice (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1927). A cartoon graphic that appeared in the Johnson City Staff-News in 1928 reflected the local—and no doubt national—view of the holiday: a flapperesque young woman labeled "Miss Prosperity" hangs onto the arm of a man in suit, bow tie, and hat, labeled "U.S. Labor," while a small male figure in a top hat, the "Public," comments "What a handsome couple they make!" (*Johnson City Chronicle* 1928).

There is no evidence that before 1929 Elizabethton marked Labor Day in any way,³² but tiny Erwin, home to the general offices of the Carolina, Clinchfield, & Ohio Railway, on occasion did celebrate the day, even if in odd fashion. In 1924, for instance, Erwin not only staged a baseball game between a local nine and one from Elizabethton, but it also staged a parade by the Ku Klux Klan. According to the *Johnson City Staff-News*, "hundreds of local Klan members," as well as members from nearby towns, marched in the parade which was the "feature of the day" (*Erwin Record* 1924).³³ Five years later the *Erwin Record* voiced its support of labor by prominently displaying at the top-center of the front page a muscular workman, head framed in a wreath of leaves, tools on his belt and in his hands. "Our Tribute to Labor! Without it no city can be inhabited . . . [original] nor the world

enjoy those advantages which make life more worth while living every day!" read the caption below the sketch (*Erwin Record* 1929).

In the aftermath of the strikes, in an effort to implement a successful corporate welfare program that would attract workers and convince them to shift loyalties from union to management, Bemberg and Glanzstoff, in a reversal of the original Labor Day, planned a series of events for the workers. Included were competitions between teams of workers or individuals from the two plants. Baseball games (these included members of management), boxing matches, foot races, and horse races were featured competitions for male workers, while tugs of war and foot races featured women. Watermelon and pie-eating contests took place among the children of workers. Entertainment included a band concert, dancing, and old-time music played by a string band. A picnic supper at the Glanzstoff cafeteria capped off the day-long celebration. Instead of stirring speeches by union leaders, the rayon plant workers heard remarks by interim plant president W.G. Kummer and personnel manager E.T. Willson (American Bemberg Films Collection 1929 - 30, Tape 1; "Labor Day Program Is Planned," 1929).

The citizens of Elizabethton and Carter County apparently had little experience with Labor Day parades, but they surely had experience, either as participants or spectators, with Fourth of July parades—as indicated by their parading in patriotic dress and with patriotic symbols. The linking of parade with patriotism was an established tradition in town and city in the United States, a tradition only strengthened by the post-World War I reaction to Bolshevism epitomized by the Red Scare.³⁴ Even in light of evidence indicating that by the end of the nineteenth century the parade by and large had become a vehicle for ethnic identification, the Fourth of July parade remained an important patriotic event for communities (Ryan 1989, 151 - 53).³⁵

By parading and demonstrating during the 1929 strikes, Bemberg and Glanzstoff workers proclaimed their class identity and sense of worthiness as human beings. In this respect, the Elizabethton factory hands, knowingly or not, became part of a historical tradition that saw workers stand up for themselves in order to reject the stigma of inferiority placed upon them by capitalists. The tradition crosses geographical and occupational boundaries to unite all workers. Elizabethton factory workers, in common with the New England operatives of the 1840s studied by David Zonderman, "did not welcome the sense of inferiority that was inflicted upon them, yet they could not deny its presence." The antebellum New England workers sought to reassert the idea of equal worth of human beings touted in the early American republic and to demand the respect due them by their employers (Zonderman 1992, 221). In the post-World War I era that made

so much of patriotism and citizenship in the greatest democracy on earth, the Elizabethton workers sought respect for themselves not only as workers, but as American citizens and patriots who had a stake in the economic prosperity of Elizabethton.

The Elizabethton parades of 1929 performed for the rayon plant workers the same function that labor scholar Shel Stromquist attributed to nineteenth-century labor parades: "They declared workers' presence and their collective power . . . and the strategic use of public space to declare the power of labor before the whole community" (1998). Over the "contested terrain" of downtown Elizabethton and the arteries leading to the rayon factories, strikers and their friends made their own claims to the public sphere dominated and controlled by the bourgeoisie.³⁶ By marching through the business district and past the plants, striking workers proclaimed that they "belonged" in Elizabethton and had a right to share in the prosperity of the town's new industrial order.

Notes

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the help of H-Labor—a labor history discussion list—participants who responded to a query on strike parades that I submitted in the summer of 1998. The responses were informative and enlightening, and I have incorporated some of these responses into the paper. I also have used a number of sources suggested by the H-Labor respondents.

2. Scholarly analysis of the strikes is included in the following works: Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York: S.A. Russell, 1936); Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920 - 1933* (1960: reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1983); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). James Hodges examines the strikes as challenge to the New South industrial order in "Challenge to the New South: The Great Textile Strikes in Elizabethton, Tennessee, 1929," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 23 (December 1964): 343 - 57. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall focused on the behavior of women strikers—and not on the strikes themselves—in "Disorderly Women: Gender and Labor Militancy in the Appalachian South," *Journal of American History*, 73 (September 1986): 353 - 82. Local and regional newspapers (e.g., *Elizabethton Star*, *Johnson City Staff-News*, *Charlotte Observer*, *Kingsport Press-Times*), mainstream labor publications (e.g., *Labor World*, *American Federationist*, *Textile Worker*, *Life and Labor Bulletin*), radical labor publications (e.g., *Daily Worker*, *Labor Defender*), trade publications (*Textile World*, *Daily News Record*, *Southern Textile Bulletin*) and left-leaning publications (e.g., *The Nation*, *New Masses*) all reported on the strikes. Left journalists/observers Mary Heaton Vorse and James Myers visited and reported on Elizabethton, as did novelist Sherwood Anderson. Leftist journalist Tom Tippet wrote on the strikes in his book *When Southern Labor Stirs* (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1931).

3. An example of an attempt to communicate via parade can be seen in the efforts of mill hands in Danville, Virginia, to break through to the paternalistic and vehemently anti-union president of Dan River Mills, H.R. Fitzgerald. Mill hands staged a silent parade of approximately four and one-half thousand workers on April 5, 1929, almost six months before the strike began on September 29. Through silently marching with placards that expressed

their protests about Dan River's use of spies, the stretchout, and cutting of wages, workers tried—unsuccessfully—to communicate with Fitzgerald and plant management. See: *Textile Worker* 18 (November 1930), 499.

4. Merritt used the 1920 census of population (*Later History of Carter County, 1865 - 1980* [Carter County, Tenn.: Homecoming '86 Heritage Project, 1986]: 422). He noted that the 1930 census recorded 8,044 persons in the town, a gain of 5,295 or 193%.

Bemberg manufactured rayon by a process which dissolved cellulose in a solution of copper oxide in ammonia (cuprammonium hydroxide). The resultant filaments were fine and lustrous and used in women's dresses and the linings of men's suit jackets. Glanzstoff manufactured rayon by the viscose process, a method which broke down cellulose with aqueous caustic soda, then carbon bisulfide. The resultant filament was stronger than the cuprammonium filament, but not as lustrous. Viscose rayon was widely used in hosiery, women's knitwear, and in blends with cotton in draperies and bedspreads. For information on rayon processes see: Mois Avram, *The Rayon Industry* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1927), 1, 3, 7 - 8, 13; and D.C. Coleman, *Courtaulds: An Economic and Social History* (London: Clarendon Press, 1969), vol. 2, 3 - 7.

5. Agriculture in Carter County had been depressed since the late part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries and could no longer compete in regional or national markets. Agricultural census reports, 1850 - 80, as well as the statistics of agriculture produced by the Department of the Interior, 1880 and 1890, and the United States Bureau of the Census statistics on farm production and ownership, 1900 - 25, show, for example, that the number of farms increased, while average acreage decreased. The 1935 publication, *Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians* (United States Department of Agriculture Misc. Pub. No. 205, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), paints a bleak picture of agriculture in the southern Appalachian region. Despite the depressed state of agriculture in the county, however, most residents apparently remained in the county and did not migrate out. The county's population, unlike that of many other southern Appalachian counties, did not decrease from 1910 to 1930, nor did it decrease for any of the ten-year census increments from 1910 through 1930. (See "Economic and Social Problems," 122 - 23.) The relatively small increase from 1910 to 1920 (19,838 to 21,488) as opposed to 1920 to 1930 (21,488 to 29,223) points to migration out in the earlier period and migration in—more than likely from nearby states of North Carolina and Virginia—in the latter period. (Census figures from Frank Merritt, *Later History of Carter County, 1865 - 1980*, Carter County, Tenn.: Homecoming '86 Heritage Project, 1986: 422.) A number of sources have focused on demographic trends in the South, Appalachia included. *Economic and Social Conditions* analyzes population trends (120 - 36), as does Carter Goodrich et al., *Migration and Economic Opportunity: The Report of the Study of Population Redistribution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936). Using the same data, both sources show that Carter County's population, 1900 - 30, did not suffer the tremendous losses associated with high rates of migration. It should be noted, however, that in a couple of crucial categories of vital statistics, data were lacking for Carter County. These categories include excess of births over deaths, 1920 - 30, as percent of 1920 population and percentage gain or loss through migration, 1920 to 1930. (*Migration and Economic Opportunity*, 63 - 64). Migration posits a percentage gain of at least 24 percent for Carter County, 1920 - 30 (65). In regard to number of children under five per 1,000 women, aged 20 - 45, migration places Carter in the 600 - 799 cohort (national average was 488). Margaret Jarman Hagood, a student of renowned regional sociologist Howard Odum, noted in her 1937 doctoral dissertation, "Mothers of the South: A Population Study of Native White Women of Childbearing Age of the Southeast," that Carter women had 559 children under five for the cohort of women aged 20 - 45. See "Mothers of the South: A Population Study of Native White Women of Childbearing Age of the Southeast" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill), 264.

6. "Labor Survey of Washington and Carter Counties and Adjacent Territories," North American Rayon and American Bemberg Records, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, "Labor Questions and Opinions, 1927 - 1929, Box 74. The report is not dated, but judging from the content, Gardner probably conducted the survey in 1926, upon or just before Bemberg began production. Gardner's comments are similar to those made by a number of Carolina, Clinchfield, & Ohio Railway industrial agents, 1905 - 1920, as they assessed the labor potential for industries along the route of the rail line through East Tennessee and western North Carolina. One agent, for instance, reported to the Freedlander Overall Company in Pennsylvania that mountain women would work ten hours a day for almost half of what workers in the North and East expected to make. See the Carolina, Clinchfield, & Ohio Railway Collection, Series III, "Industrial Agents' Reports," Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Box 40, Folder 8. All of the collection's agents' reports can be found in boxes 25 - 64. Jacquelyn Hall quotes Bessie Edens in her 1975 interview that the town elites told corporate management of the plants that "women wasn't used to working, and they'd work for almost nothing, and the men would work for low wages" ("Disorderly Women," 369). Articles published in local and regional newspapers praised "native" local labor that would work hard—and cheaply—and not form unions, as did such national trade publications as *Southern Textile Bulletin*. Other contemporary sources that commented on industry's belief that southern workers, and particularly Piedmont and Appalachian workers, would work cheaply include: Tom Tippet, *When Southern Labor Stirs*; A.J. Buttrey, "Salvation in Tennessee: Clergy and the Textile Strikes," *The World Tomorrow* 12 (October 1924): 396; and Frank Bohn, "Tennessee's New Silkworm-Industrial Germany Comes to America," *Review of Reviews* 78 (October 1928): 368.

In his 1949 dissertation on Elizabethton, John Fred Holly contended that city manager Edwin C. Alexander, one of the persons instrumental in bringing the plants to Elizabethton, showed him a document on labor prepared by civic leaders and presented to Bemberg representatives. In the document civic leaders "promised" the corporate officials that they would never have to pay workers more than ten dollars per week. See Holly, "Elizabethton, Tennessee: A Case Study of Southern Industrialization" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1949), 134.

It should also be noted that Gardner's views on the white textile worker, rather standard for the time, had a history dating back to the late nineteenth-century establishment of the South's (including, especially the Piedmont's) mill village and extending through the boosterism and modernizing campaigns of the 1920s. On the historiography of mill village portrayals of the textile worker, consult Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family*, esp. xvi - xvii and notes 7 and 8; and Allen Tullos, *Habits of Industry: White Culture and the Transformation of the Carolina Piedmont* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989): 170 - 71. Hall and Tullos note the crucial role played by Wilbur J. Cash's 1941 work *Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred Knopf) in later solidifying the image of the "pitiable" white worker and the generous, paternalistic mill owner.

7. Financial transactions of Watauga Development are detailed in Carter County Deed Books, 1925 - 29, Carter County Courthouse, Elizabethton, Tennessee. For allegations that the plants forced new employees to rent houses built by WDC, see: "Mothwurf Denies Houses Specified For New Employes [sic.]," *ES*, February 5, 1929, pp. 1, 6.

8. In his book *The Strike: A Study in Collective Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), E.T. Hiller explains that often it appears that a strike begins as the result of a simple incident, but that in reality the incident is "merely a point upon which attention is fixed. It is a symbol of cumulated grievances." The causes of a strike, writes Hiller, are deeper than any single incident or disagreement. They are cumulative and complex (58 - 59). It certainly was the case that the trigger for the strike was Bowen's being reassigned and having her supervisory responsibilities assigned to someone else. These incidents triggered a strike which stemmed from a list of cumulative grievances. See especially Bowen's accounts, "\$10.64 a Week:

Testimony By a Textile Striker at Elizabethton," *New Republic* 59 (May 29, 1929): 41 - 43 and "The Story of the Elizabethton Strike," *American Federationist* 36 (June 1929): 666 - 67.

9. Plant president Mothwurf denied that he ever had agreed to a settlement with Local 1630, but rather that the alleged "terms" of the settlement actually consisted of instructions which he had given to plant foremen concerning wage and production adjustments. Although Mothwurf and Franz Marthaus were at the Sevier Hotel in Elizabethton at the same time as Conciliation Service mediator Charles Wood, Tennessee Federation of Labor head Paul Aymon, and UTW organizer Alfred Hoffman, evidence indicates that the labor representatives duped Mothwurf and Marthaus into going to the Sevier and that the union-hating Mothwurf did not enter into any agreement with the union representatives. See Noel Sargent's account, "East Tennessee's Rayon Strikes of 1929," 19 - 20. Mediator Wood claimed that the two sides indeed had entered into an agreement. See documents relating to the strike in Conciliation Service Records, Box 191.

10. Accounts in the local papers praised the settlement brokered by Weinstock as one that was fair and equitable; accounts in the UTW publication *Textile Worker* and the AFL publication *The Federationist* claimed that the settlement provided the basis to work out collective bargaining in the future. See, for example, the following articles: "Peace Moves Close Struggle, *Elizabethton Star*, May 25, 1929, pp. 1, 3; "Strike Ended; Employees Agree to Return to Work," *Johnson City Chronicle/Johnson City Staff News*, May 26, 1929, p. A14; Edward McGrady, "Conciliation Proposals," *The Federationist* 36 (June 1929): 671; and Matilda Lindsay, "The National Guard and Elizabethton," *Textile Worker* 17 (August 1929): 289. Weinstock, of course, thought that she had engineered a breakthrough settlement that pleased management and work force alike. See June 13, 1969 interview of Weinstock by Julia Blodgett, Box 2, p. 1 of transcript of Tape 5, "Elizabethton," Anna Weinstock Schneider Papers, Labor-Management Documentation Center, M.P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University. Journalists Mary Heaton Vorse and John Moutoux expressed their dissent in articles written for the *Federated Press* and *Knoxville News Sentinel*, respectively. Vorse reported that immediately after Weinstock finished reading the terms of the settlement "the vast auditorium was filled with a roar of 'Noes!' and 'Boos!'" The spontaneous demonstration came as a surprise to the UTW leaders, who for days had known that a settlement was in the air, and who looked at the terms as a signal, and almost unexpected victory," ("Rayon Workers Reluctantly Accept Settlement," May 27, 1929, in Box 1, Fld. 16, Vorse Papers, microfilm version). Moutoux, likewise, reported that the workers only reluctantly accepted the settlement: "When the terms were first read to the strikers late Saturday, they booed and shouted 'no.' It took two and one-half hours of speech-making and question answering to overcome that sentiment, and finally swing the vote in favor of accepting the proposal," ("Peace Comes to Happy Valley; Rayon Workers Accept Terms Offered by Bemberg-Glanzstoff," *Knoxville News Sentinel*, May 26, 1929: p.1).

11. The *Elizabethton Star* did not carry local weather reports, but both the *Star* and the *Johnson City papers* (which did have local weather reports) carried articles detailing rain, floods, and tornadoes which were plaguing the Southeast.

12. Allen "promised" the workers that the strike would be mediated, even though Mothwurf had refused to meet with Bowen's committee. As the strike progressed, Mothwurf consistently refused to meet with strikers' committees or leaders.

13. The First National Bank was founded in 1910 by a group of local financiers, among them Edwin C. Alexander. See biographical sketch of Alexander in E.C. Alexander Papers, Archives of Appalachia.

14. More than likely the international office of UTW issued the charter in 1927, but the workers failed to follow through on organizing a viable local.

15. Other still images of strikers milling about outside plant gates and of National Guard Troops breaking up picket lines appeared in the *Elizabethton Star*, *Knoxville News Sentinel*, and *Johnson City Chronicle*. *Daily Worker* printed two images of women strikers in jail, while the *New Sentinel* published an image of "Texas Bill" (Clara Turner), considered a rabble-rouser and "disorderly woman." The best images can be seen on film, either in the Raulston Collection or the American Bemberg Films Collection, both of which are referenced later in this article. Film in the Raulston Collection was shot by the plant photographer, but at an undetermined time the film passed into the hands of Clarence Raulston, who as a guardsman was part of the Knoxville machine-gun unit deployed in Elizabethton. Raulston stayed in Elizabethton and married a woman who worked for Bemberg after the strikes. Archives of Appalachia staff transferred the film to VHS. The films in the Bemberg films collection were donated to the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) in two separate donations: the first in 1974 by State Senator Marshall T. Nave and the second in 1976 by former Bemberg research chemist and executive Buford Goldstein in 1976. In 2004 TSLA loaned the films to the Archives of Appalachia for restoration and transfer to DVD. The Nave donation includes footage of Herbert Hoover's visit to Elizabethton in 1928, as well as footage of the strike and strike parades. Although the original donor list for the Buford donation claims that the thirty-one reels capture images of Bemberg workers and facilities, the dates of plant construction (1927 - 28) and the types of training activities (in viscose rayon production) indicate that the films relate to American Glanzstoff (later North American Rayon). The social events more than likely are post-strike (perhaps 1929-30), as there are no indications that management sponsored social events for workers before the 1929 strikes. Information on the TSLA accessions obtained via email correspondence with Carol Roberts, TSLA, July 18 and 19, 2005. Information on the Archives of Appalachia accessions obtained from collection finding aids and from email correspondence with Norma Myers, July 19, 2005.

16. Michael Kazin and Steven J. Ross, "America's Labor Day: The Dilemma of a Workers' Celebration," *The Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992): 1300, reproduced the 1882 illustration of the first Labor Day parade in New York City which appeared in Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*. The authors point out that the illustrator made sure to depict the marchers' respectable dress. Article accessed via <http://www.JSTOR.org>.

17. In a June 23, 1998 post to the H-Labor discussion list, Terry Irving wrote about the research he and Lucy Taksa were undertaking in Australia concerning workers' parades, their routes, and the relation of those routes to "sites of significance" to the labor movement. Included among these sites are those of popular resistance, of workers' housing, and of buildings which house those who hold political power.

18. Hall notes that grocer J.D. White, a strike supporter, turned his store into a union commissary and joined striking picketers (1986, 370).

19. The local did not organize the silent parade; Merchant J.D. White, a strike supporter, organized it to honor Moreland. Perrot notes that in France, 1870 - 91, silent demonstrations were rare and that usually shouting, singing, or band music accompanied demonstrations. Perrot found only three silent demonstrations, two of which involved women: the 1889 Bordeaux cigar-workers and the 1889 weavers of Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville. It appears that Perrot is speaking of demonstrations in general, as opposed to strike parades in particular. The previously-mentioned silent protest of Dan River Mills workers falls into the category of demonstration, since it took place before the beginning of the strike.

20. Newspaper reports did not state the place from which the parade originated, but probably it began at the union hall. A total of five National Guard companies were called to Elizabethton, including one machine-gun company from Knoxville. The total number of soldiers in Elizabethton was 800, but not all of them were stationed on the plant property. A number of them (exactly how many is unclear) were patrolling the roads leading into Elizabethton from such rural communities as Valley Forge, Gap Creek, Hampton, and Stoney Creek. Eighty-four deputy sheriffs supplemented the guard forces.

21. George Berry was the printing pressman's union head who briefly acted as the governor's mediator with plant president Arthur Mothwurf.

22. It is not clear who made the decisions to picket. UTW organizer Alfred Hoffman, often cited as one of the radical influences on the strike, was absent from Elizabethton throughout almost all of the second strike. For a good part of May, Hoffman was in a hospital in Asheville receiving treatment for a throat ailment. Union men Stubbs, Solomon, and Markland may have been influential in the decision-making processes, as may have been Tennessee Federation of Labor president Paul Aymon. Interestingly, Conciliation Service mediator, Anna Weinstock, given credit for settling the second strike, in a 1969 interview with M.E. Blodgett, said that when W.G. Kummer succeeded Mothwurf as president of the plants, he discovered files which revealed that Markland had been on the company payroll. See: Anna Weinstock Schneider Papers, Catherwood Library, Cornell University, Box 1, Folder 15. I have found no support for that assertion. Markland was included on the companies' lists of "undesirables," but Stubbs and Solomon were not. See: "Consolidated List of Undesirables for Glanzstoff and Bemberg; Including List Furnished by Lawyers," May 18, 1929, American Bemberg and North American Rayon Companies Records, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Box 74.

23. Numerous newspaper articles in the *Elizabethton Star*, *Johnson City Chronicle*, *Knoxville News Sentinel*, and *Kingsport Times* reported on the May picketing and arrests. Subsequent indictments and trials for violations of the anti-picketing injunctions took place in Chancery Court, while indictments and trials for assault and intimidation took place in Criminal Court. Newspaper accounts of the trials, microfilmed Chancery Court records, and original Criminal Court records for May-August tell the story of those arrested, indicted, tried for offenses. Microfilmed records are located at Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn., while originals are housed in both the old Courthouse, and the new Carter County Criminal Court and Jail building, Elizabethton, Tennessee.

24. Margaret Bowen, the "instigator" of the first strike, was a TFL executive board member. The federation provided financial support for the strike and at the May 13 meeting treasurer W.C. Birthright recommended a raise in per capita tax to five cents. The committee on officers' reports approved the recommendation (see pp. 46, 63). Indicative of the tensions and violence accompanying the strike were a number of violent acts, some of which occurred in a cluster, some in retaliation for others. Included were the dynamiting of the home of Mack Elliott, a union sympathizer, the burning of a barn owned by a plant guard who remained at work, the burning of a barn located near Bemberg and owned by Watauga Development Company, and the dynamiting of the city's water main during the early morning hours of May 16. The perpetrators who burned plant guard Nat Simerly's barn left a death threat note for him and neighbor John Arwood, an employee who initially went out on strike but who returned to work. Local newspapers reported on the acts. See, for example, "Explosion Cuts Off City Water," *ES*, May 16, 1929; "Elizabethton Water Main Is Dynamited Scores Are Arrested," *JCC*, May 17, 1929; "Stoney Creek House Razed By Dynamite," *ES*, May 10, 1929; "Barn Near Valley Forge Burns Down At Midnight; Warning Note Found," *ES*, May 11, 1929; and "Barn At Bemberg Line is Burned," *KNS*, May 12, 1929.

25. Davis focuses on the mockery of authority and the threat to order in working-class parades of early nineteenth-century Philadelphia.

26. Testimony in the cases of those workers arrested for picketing violations is contained in articles in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, *Daily Worker*, *Kingsport Times*, *Elizabethton Star*, and *Johnson City Chronicle*, as well as in transcripts of the court proceedings. See especially: John T. Moutoux, "Fussed Guardsmen Admit Girls Disarmed Them," *KNS*, May 19, 1929, p. 2; Moutoux, "'Texas Bill' is Female Star in Textile Pickets," *KNS*, May 21, 1929, p. 2; "Boyd Arrested Over Accident," *KNS*, May 17, 1929, pp. 1, 17; and "Eight Strikers to Face Grand Jury," *KT*, May 19, 1929, p. 1. Trial testimony can be found in *American Glanzstoff Corporation et al. v. George Miller et al.*, from the Chancery Court at Elizabethton, Tenn., in the Court of Appeals of Tennessee at Knoxville, May Term, 1930, Supreme Court Cases, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn., Books 3, 4, and 5. Hall analyzes the gendered behavior of female strikers and male guardsmen, in particular on Gap Creek Road, in "Disorderly Women," 372 - 76.

27. Zonderman, *Aspirations and Anxieties*, discusses street protests and parades of antebellum New England factory operatives in Chapter 7, "To the Streets and the Halls: Workers, Protest, and Organizing," 195 - 233.

28. Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike*, 1913 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988, 157 - 78) discusses the workers' pageant performed at Madison Square Garden in Chapter Six, "The Paterson Pageant," but does not discuss the workers' parade up Fifth Avenue to the garden. Yet, as William Simmons notes in his article, "Parades Amid the Standoff in the Old Red Scar," 237, an image of parading workers graces the cover of Golin's book. In his dissertation on the Passaic strike Morton Siegel notes that the textile workers' parading and the violent reactions against paraders by police swayed public opinion to favor the strikers and led to rescinding of the public safety commissioner's order prohibiting picketing ("The Passaic Textile Strike of 1926," Columbia Univ., 1953: 184 - 85).

29. On festive and street culture in the early republic, consult Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); and on Independence Day festivities, consult Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.) It is important to note that artisans were prominent in celebrations and parades that took place in the early republic, as well as in the antebellum period studied by Ryan in her essay, "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order."

30. East Tennessee newspapers reflected national concern with violence accompanying the 1922 injunction against striking railway shopmen issued only one week before Labor Day. (See, for example, "Labor Day To Be Crucial Injunction Test," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, September 4, 1922; and "U.S. Marshals Are Mobilized To Watch Labor Day Demonstration," *Johnson City Staff*, September 4, 1922). Erwin, Tennessee, is a small town east of Elizabethton in Unicoi County, Tenn., and home to the headquarters of the Carolina, Clinchfield, & Ohio Railway.

31. "Industry and Commerce At Standstill In Observance Of Annual Labor Day Fest," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, September 4, 1922, pp. 1, 9. It is interesting to note that the sub-heading for the article referred not to workers marching, but rather to "industrialists": "Thousands See Great Marching Column of Industrialists Swing By—Big Gathering At Chilhowee."

32. Pre-1929 issues of the *Elizabethton Star* burned in a fire at the newspaper's main office. Examination of Frank Merritt's *Later History of Carter County, 1865 - 1980* yielded no information on Labor Day observances in Elizabethton before 1929.

33. Even considering that the Klan made a nationwide appeal to members to rise up across the nation in response to a political turf fight that left six men dead in Herrin, Illinois, it nonetheless seems strange that local Klans saw fit to associate themselves with labor, itself often tainted by association with "radicals."

34. For discussion of Fourth of July parades in the early national period see Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street*, and Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*.

35. Elizabethton, at any rate, was not rent by ethnic conflict, as the overwhelmingly white population of town and county consisted largely of English, Scots-Irish, and Germanic people. The county had a minority African American population descended from former slaves, as well as a minority of persons of Cherokee-white heritage.

36. John L. Brooke uses the term "contested terrain" in his wide-ranging review of Newman's book, *Parades and Politics of the Streets: Festive Culture in the Early Republic*, in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 29 (Summer 1998): 5, 7 Accessed via <http://web6infotrac.galegroup.com>.

References

- American Bemberg Films Collection. 1929 - 30. Johnson City, TN: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.
- Book of laws of the Tennessee Federation of Labor as amended and adopted May 15, 1929, together with the proceedings of the thirty-third annual convention held at Knoxville and Elizabethton, Tenn., May 13, 14, and 15, 1929.* 1929. Nashville: Tennessee Federation of Labor.
- Bowen, Margaret. 1929a. The story of the Elizabethton strike. *American Federationist* 36 (June): 666 - 67.
- _____. 1929b. \$10.64 a week: Testimony by a textile striker at Elizabethton. *New Republic* 59 (May 29): 41 - 43.
- Brooke, John L. 1998. Review of Simon Newman, *Parades and politics of the streets: Festive culture in the early republic*. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (Summer 1998) (InfoTrac One File). <http://web6infotrac.galegroup.com>.
- Bynum, Victoria E. 1992. *Unruly women: Politics of social and sexual control in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Campbell, Peter. 1998. Posts to H-Labor on dress of parading strikers. June 24 - 25. *Charlotte Observer*. 1929. Rayon strike is at deadlock. March 15.
- Consolidated list of undesirables for Glanzstoff and Bemberg; Including list furnished by lawyers. 1929. American Bemberg and North American Rayon Companies Records. Johnson City, TN: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University.
- Daily Times* (Chattanooga, TN). 1917a. Mill owners standing pat. May 18.
- _____. 1917b. Big Parade of Textiles. June 6.
- Daily Worker*. 1929a. 1,000 More Join Rayon Strike in Southern Mill. March 14.
- _____. 1929b. Rayon scabs hard to get. March 20.
- _____. 1929c. Elizabethton workers parade. May 8.
- Davis, Susan. 1982. Making night hideous: Christmas revelry and public order in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. *American Quarterly* 34 (Summer): 185 - 99. <http://www.jstor.org/etsu.edu>.
- _____. 1988. *Parades and power: Street theater in nineteenth-century Philadelphia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Elizabethton Star*. 1929a. Mothwurf denies houses specified for new employes [sic]. February 5.
- _____. 1929b. Strike closes local plant. March 13.
- _____. 1929c. Strikers hit Buck Little for assault. March 13.
- _____. 1929d. Strikers at plant form local union. March 14.

- _____. 1929e. Strike quiet: Workers meet tonight. March 15.
- _____. 1929f. Strikers pick committee to see officials; Workers parade; Striking employes [sic] make merry about streets. March 21.
- _____. 1929g. Conference held to plan strike action. April 20.
- _____. 1929h. Operations resumed in one department; Troops keep watch. May 6.
- _____. 1929i. Asks Situation Be Referred to Justice Bureau. May 8.
- _____. 1929j. Little change seen in local labor tangle. May 10.
- _____. 1929k. Carter Tabernacle on Elk Avenue to be destroyed soon. September 14.
- Erwin Record*. 1924. Erwin observes quiet holiday. September 1.
- _____. 1929. Our tribute to labor (cartoon). August 30.
- Garrison, Dee. 1989. *Mary Heaton Vorse: The life of an American legend*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Hall, Jacquelyn. 1981. Interview of Robert Cole, Elizabethton, Tennessee, July 10. Transcript in possession of Department of History, Univ. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- _____. 1986. Disorderly women: Gender and labor militancy in the Appalachian south. *Journal of American History* 73(September): 353 - 82.
- Hardin, J.A. 1929. Letters to Governor Henry Horton. Governor Henry Horton Papers, Box 12, Folder 2. Nashville, TN: Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Hiller, E.T. 1928. *The strike: A study in collective action*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hodges, James. 1964. Challenge to the New South: The great textile strikes in Elizabethton, Tennessee, 1929. *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 23(December): 343 - 57.
- Horton, Governor Henry. 1929. Letter to George Berry, May 11. Governor Henry Horton Papers, Box 10, Folder 3. Nashville, TN: Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Irving, Terry. 1998. Post to *H-labor*. June 23.
- Johnson City Chronicle*. 1927. Quiet labor day observance here; City decorated. September 7.
- _____. 1928. Today's parade. September 3.
- _____. 1929a. Glanzstoff Plant closed following disorders by strikers after walk out. March 14.
- _____. 1929b. Strikers throng streets, adding touch of gaiety to night scenes. March 14.
- _____. 1929c. Glanzstoff refuses to accede to union demands. March 15.
- _____. 1929d. Glanzstoff Plant will open Monday: Union membership grows. March 17.
- _____. 1929e. 2 Happy Valley textile plants resume operation according to schedule: No disturbance. May 7.
- _____. 1929f. All departments in partial operation at Bemberg report. May 8.
- _____. 1929g. Horton declines to remove troops from strike area now. May 10.
- _____. 1929h. Elizabethton water main dynamited scores arrested. May 17.
- Johnson City Staff News*. 1929a. Glanzstoff will not recognize union. March 14.
- _____. 1929b. Mothwurf declares numbers would return at the old wage scale. March 15.
- Jones, Hazel. 1929. The part I played in the strike in Elizabethton. In "Scraps of Work and Play," p. 17. "Southern Summer School, 1929." American Labor Education Service Records, Box 111. Ithaca, NY: Labor-Management Documentation Center, M.P. Catherwood Library, Cornell Univ.
- Jones, James B., Jr. 1993. Class consciousness and worker solidarity in urban Tennessee: The Chattanooga carmen's strikes, 1899 - 1917. *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 52 (Summer): 98 - 112.
- Kaster, Greg. 1998. Posts to *H-Labor* on dress of parading strikers. June 24 - 25.
- Kazin, Michael and Steven J. Ross. 1992. America's Labor Day: The dilemma of a worker's celebration. *The Journal of American History* 78 (March): 1294 - 1323. <http://www.jstor.org>.
- Kingsport Times*. 1929a. Glanzstoff employes [sic] on strike. March 13.

- _____. 1929b. Glanzstoff Situation is at standstill. March 14.
- _____. 1929c. Rayon plants are reopened; 800 guards on duty-machine guns mounted on buildings. May 6.
- _____. 1929d. Rayon strike now an endurance test. May 7.
- Knoxville Journal. 1929a. Strikers force closing large rayon factory. March 14.
- _____. 1929b. Rayon plants plan resumption of work. March 20, 1,3.
- Knoxville News Sentinel. 1922. Industry and commerce at standstill in observance of annual labor day fest. September 4.
- _____. 1928a. Holiday sees heavy traffic. September 2.
- _____. 1928b. Plants idle for workmen to celebrate. September 2.
- _____. 1929a. Glanzstoff Mill shut as 2000 go out. March 13.
- _____. 1929b. Rayon mills idle as over 5000 are out. April 16.
- Labor survey of Washington and Carter Counties and adjacent territories. n.d. Labor questions and opinions, 1927 - 1929. Box 74. North American Rayon and American Bemberg Records. Johnson City, TN: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State Univ.
- McDonnell, Lawrence T. 1998. Post to *H-Labor* on Charleston strike parade. July 19.
- Merritt, Frank. 1986. *Later history of Carter County, 1865 - 1980*. Carter County, TN: Homecoming '86 Heritage Project.
- Moulierc, Henri. 1977. The strike: War or festival? *Diogenes* 25(Summer): 55 - 70.
- Moutoux, John. 1929a. Glanzstoff company won't recognize new union: Plans to reopen despite. *Knoxville News Sentinel*. March 14.
- _____. 1929b. Glanzstoff head claims 1,000 report to work; Disputed by union chief. *Knoxville News Sentinel*. March 15.
- _____. 1929c. Strikers sing and cheer at guard troops. *Knoxville News Sentinel*. May 16.
- Perrot, Michelle. 1987. *Workers on strike, France 1871 - 1890*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Raulston, Helen. 1929. Collection. Johnson City, TN: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State Univ.
- Ryan, Mary. 1989. The American parade: Representations of the nineteenth-century social order. In *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt, 131 - 53. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sargent, Noel. 1929. East Tennessee's rayon strikes of 1929: An analysis of the trouble. *American Industries* 29 (June): 7 - 32.
- Schmidt, Leigh Eric. 1991. The commercialization of the calendar: American holidays and the culture of consumption, 1870 - 1930. *The Journal of American History* 78 (December): 887 - 916. <http://www.jstor.org/etsu.edu>.
- Siegel, Morton. 1953. The Passaic textile strike of 1926. Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ.
- Simson, William. 2001. Parades amid the standoff in the Old Red Scar: Interpreting film images of striking industrial operatives in the East Tennessee copper basin, 1939 - 1940. *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 7(Fall): 227 - 55.
- Spencer, Richard. 1998. Posts to *H-Labor* on dress of parading strikers. June 24 - 25.
- Stromquist, Shel. 1998. Post to *H-Labor* on strike parades. June 23.
- Sunday Times* (Chattanooga, TN). 1917. Picketing the Next Move. May 27.
- Tedesco, Marie. 1989. The rayon plants at Elizabethton, Tennessee: A case study of Appalachian economic development, 1925 - 1988. *Locus: An Historical Journal of Regional Perspectives on National Topics* 1(Spring): 47 - 67.
- _____. 1998a. North American rayon corporation and American Bemberg Corporation. In *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West, 696 - 97. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press.
- _____. 1998b. Strikes, rayon plants at Elizabethton, Tennessee. In *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West, 894 - 95. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press.

- _____. n.d. Walk out Margaret and we are behind you. Chapter four of unpublished manuscript on history of Elizabethton rayon plants.
- Women's Wear Daily*. 1929. Complex economic conditions found behind southern rayon strikes. May 7.
- Wood, Charles. 1929. Reports and correspondence. Conciliation Service Records. Box 191. College Park, MD: National Archives and Records Administration.
- Zonderman, David A. 1992. *Aspirations and anxieties: New England factory workers and the mechanized factory system, 1815 - 1850*. New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- _____. 1998. Posts to *H-Labor* on dress of parading strikers. June 24 - 25.